

## REMARKS

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 1-6 and 19-23, which were all of the then pending claims, under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over the prior art. In particular, Claims 1-6 and 19-22 were rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent application publication no. 2002/0099797 (Chou) in view of U.S. patent application publication no. 2002/0046051 (Katzman, et al.), and Claim 23 was rejected as being unpatentable over Chou in view of Katzman and further in view of U.S. Patent 7,187,973 (Monteleone, et al.).

Independent Claims 1 and 19 are being amended to better define the subject matters of these claims. New Claim 24, which is dependent from Claim 1, is being added to describe a feature of an embodiment of the invention. Claims 25-32, which generally correspond to original claims 7-9, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 17 respectively, are being added to define the invention in alternative ways.

Generally, Claims 1-6 and 19-32 patentably distinguish over the prior art because the prior art does not disclose or render obvious the feature of a user and an agent creating a requisition order during an instant messaging session by interactively communicating with each other during an instant messaging session, thereby eliminating the need to use a Web site to create the requisition order, and as described in independent Claims 1, 19, 25 and 29.

The present invention related to a procedure for using instant messaging to provide and receive information about requisition orders over the Internet or other computer network. As discussed in detail in the present application, in a requisition system, it is desirable that the individual who has submitted a purchase request or order have continuous, timely access to the status of the order. One challenge to an Internet based requisitioning system is to provide this access. This challenge is complicated by the fact that, in an Internet based system, a requisition order may be acted upon by a number of people in different parts of the world.

One way to provide status access is to use a Web interface. There are, however, a number of disadvantages to this approach. One important disadvantage is that, to use a Web based solution, the user must log on to the Web site, go through the profile creation process, navigate through the Web site to a search section, and then search for their order. This is time consuming and can be complicated or difficult for some users.

The present invention effectively addresses this and other challenges.

One embodiment of the invention relates to a method of creating and providing information about a requisition order. This method comprises providing an automated agent for receiving and identifying a set of inquiries about the requisition order; and for each identified inquiry, preparing an associated response. In this method, a user transmits to the agent one of the set of inquiries, the agent identifies the transmitted inquiry and prepares the associated response, and an instant messaging system is used to send the associated response from the agent to the user.

Also, the user initiates an instant messaging session with the agent via the instant messaging system, and the user and the agent create the requisition order during the instant messaging session by interactively communicating with each other during the instant messaging session via the instant messaging system. This eliminates the need to use a Web site, and its associated complications and delays, to create the requisition order.

The prior art does not disclose or render obvious creating a requisition order in the above-described way.

For instance, Chou describes a system for generating a requisition order. In one disclosed embodiment, a client computer system is configured to allow a plurality of users to access a server computing system. The server computer system assigns each user to work site, and identifies items which may, and items which may not, be requisitioned by a user from the work

site. The server computer system receives a request for the requisition of one or more items selected by a user, and verifies that each requested item is an item that may be requisitioned by a user at the work site with which the user is associated.

As it is believed the Examiner has recognized, Chou does not employ an instant messaging system in the requisition process. In order to address this, the Examiner cites Katzman.

Katzman discloses an electronic concession stand application that provides for users to view and purchase products on-line from suppliers. One embodiment provides direct targeted marketing and order fulfillment between purchasers and suppliers of goods and services. An order wizard is provided to present a categorized list of goods and services and allows members to access local vendors, and the order wizard allows for direct communication via e mail, chat, and other Internet technologies. In one example of the electronic concession stand application, discussed in paragraphs 99 and 100 of Katzman, an instant message may be used to confirm that suppliers will be able to deliver.

An important difference between Katzman and the procedure of the present invention is that in the present invention, the instant message is used to create the order, while in Katzman, the instant message is used to confirm delivery, but not to create the order. This difference is important because, as a result, the present invention enables the requisition to be completely prepared without the need to access a Web site, which for some users can be complicated, time consuming and difficult.

Independent Claims 1, 19, 25 and 29 describe this feature of the present invention. In particular, these claims describe the feature that the user and the agent create the requisition order during the instant messaging session by interactively communicating with each other

during the instant messaging session via the instant messaging system, thereby eliminating the need to use a Web site to create the requisition order.

The other references of record have been reviewed, and these other references, whether considered individually or in combination, also do not disclose or render obvious this feature of the invention.

For instance, Monteleone, et al. discloses a procedure for purchasers to enter product orders electronically. In this procedure, the purchasers have immediate access to order and shipment status via a network application.

Monteleone, et al. was cited by the Examiner primarily for its disclosure of an agent returning to the user a list of order identifications and sending to the user a list of approvers. There is no disclosure, though, in Monteleone, et al of the user and agent creating the order during the instant messaging session, as now described in independent Claims 1, 23 and 29.

In view of the above-discussed differences between Claims 1, 19, 25 and 29 and the prior art, and because of the advantages associated with those differences, Claims 1, 19, 25 and 29 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are allowable. Claims 2-6, 23 and 24 are dependent from Claim 1 and are allowable therewith. Claims 26-28 are dependent from Claim 25 and are allowable therewith; and Claims 30-32 are dependent from, and are allowable with, Claim 29. The Examiner is, accordingly, respectfully requested to reconsider and to withdraw the rejections of Claims 1-6 and 19-23 under 35 U.S.C. 103, and to allow these claims and new Claims 24-32.

It is believed that the present application is now in condition for allowance, a notice of which is requested. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' Attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is asked to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

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